



## National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

art • music • drama • dance • creative writing

### **\* About the Festival \***

Nationwide, Department of Affairs (VA) medical facilities use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help Veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Across the country each year, Veterans treated at VA facilities compete in a local creative arts competition. This competition includes 53 categories in the visual arts division this year that range from oil painting to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. In addition, there are 123 categories in the performing arts pertaining to all aspects of music, dance, drama and creative writing. The creative writing division is a more recent addition to the competition and includes original works in poetry, essay, short story, and personal experience writing. A national selection committee chooses first, second and third place winners among all of the entries. Select winners are invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival each year.

In 2010, 3625 Veterans from 122 VA facilities entered the competition nationwide, with 143 of the medal-winning Veterans earning an invitation to participate in the 2010 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, hosted by the VA Medical Center in Tomah, Wisconsin. In 2011, the Festival will be hosted by the VA Medical Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is a week of learning, exploring, fellowship and celebration of the healing power of the arts. Because the gold, silver or bronze medal winners are already selected to participate in the Festival, there is no competition at the event itself; rather, it serves as a showcase for the top national winners. During the week of the event, participants may attend classes in fine, applied and craft art all taught by local artists. As part of the Festival, Veterans will also visit a variety of local attractions including art museums and galleries as well as other venues of interest to area visitors.

The Festival event will culminate on Sunday, October 24, 2010, with an art exhibit featuring all first-place art entries in the lobby of the beautiful Viterbo University Fine Arts Center, followed by a gala stage show performance in the Fine Arts Center itself. The stage show is professionally directed with live orchestral accompaniment generously provided by the Music Performance Fund. Tickets will be free and actively distributed to assure a full house for the Veterans' performance.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is co-sponsored each year by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Legion Auxiliary and Help Hospitalized Veterans.